Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PEKING 01681 01 OF 02 060242Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0959
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PEKING 1681

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT MPOL CH
SUBJ: PRC LEADERS ADDRESS ALL-ARMY POLITICAL WORK CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY. PARTY CHAIRMAN HUA KUO-FENG, VICE CHAIRMEN YEH CHIEN-YING AND TENG HSIAO-PING, AND POLITBURO MEMBER/PLA GENERAL POLITICAL DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR WEI KUO-CHING ADDRESSED AN ALL-ARMY POLITICAL WORK CONFERENCE IN SESSION IN PEKING SINCE LATE MAY. WEI KUO-CHING'S SPEECH ADDRESSED CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS IN THE PLA AND "PROPOSED PERTINENT SOLUTIONS" ACCORDING TO TENG; THUS FAR NEITHER THE TEXT NOR A SUMMARY HAS BEEN RELEASED, HOWEVER. THE OTHER THREE SPEECHES WERE MUTUALLY HAILED AND ENDORSED BY THE RESPECTIVE LEADERS BUT DIFFERED SIGNIFICANTLY IN TONE, EMPHASIS, AND CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE ROLE OF POLITICAL WORK. HUA TERMED POLITICS THE "COMMANDER" AND /SOUL" IN EVERYTHING, STRESSED "STRICTER AND HIGHER" POLITICAL DEMANDS ON THE ARMY, AND DEFINED "REALLY POWERFUL COMBAT CAPABILITY" AS THE PRODUCT OF
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PAGE 02 PEKING 01681 01 OF 02 060242Z

"A HIGH LEVEL OF PROLETARIAN CONSCIOUSNESS" AND MODERN WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT. YEH DELIVERED HOMILIES AND REMINISCENCES ON THE TRADITIONAL IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL WORK IN THE PLA -- "THE LIFEBLOD OF OUR ARMY" -- AND CALLED FOR "CONSCIENTIOUS RECTIFICATION" IN THE ARMY TO RAISE COMBAT STRENGTH. TENG, CONTINUING TO REVEL IN HIS ROLE OF ICONOCLAST, SAID VIRTUALLY NOTHING ABOUT POLTICAL

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

WORK, CASTIGATED THOSE WHO GLINDLY AND MECHANICALLY TRANSMIT INSTRUCTIONS, LAID STRESS ON CHANGING TIMES AND CONDITIONS, ASSUMED FOR HIMSELF THE ROLE OF INTERPRETING MAO "ACCURATELY", AND DELIVERED A NOT-SO-VEILED WARNING TO FORMER ASSOCIATES OF LIN PIAO WHO EARLIER EVADED CRITICISM. THESE DIFFERENCES EXPRESSED IN THE SPEECHES PUBLICLY DEEPEN THE CLEAVAGE BETWEEN TENG AND THE OTHERS WHICH HAD SURFACED OPENLY DURING THE NATIONAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. AN ALL-ARMY POLITICAL WORK CONFERENCE HAS BEEN IN SESSION IN PEKING SINCE MID OR LATE MAY. PRESIDED OVER BY POLITBURO MEMBER AND PLA GENERAL POLITICAL DEPARTMENT (GPD) DIRECTOR WEI KUO-CHING, THE CONFERENCE HAS HEARD ADDRESSES BY THE PRC'S TOP THREE LEADERS. APPROXIMATELY HALF THE POLITBURO MEMBERS WERE IN ATTENDANCE, ALTHOUGH LOCAL LEADERS CONCURRENTLY HOLDING MILITARY TITLES WERE ABSENT (LI TEH-SHENG IN SHENYANG, HSU SHIH-YU IN CANTON, AND SU CHEN-HUA, THE NAVY FIRST POLITICAL COMMISSAR WHO IS FIRST SECRETARY IN SHANGHAI).

3. THE CONFERENCE, WHICH WAS ALLEGEDLY SCHEDULED FOR 1975 BY THE MILITARY COMMISSION BUT ABORTED THROUGH OPPOSITION FROM THE GANG OF FOUR, PREPARED THREE DRAFT DOCUMENTS: A RESOLUTION ON STRENGTHENING POLITICAL WORK, REGULATIONS FOR POLITICAL WORK, AND REGULATIONS FOR CADRES IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 PEKING 01681 01 OF 02 060242Z

MILITARY SERVICE. THUS FAR NEITHER THESE DOCUMENTS NOR THE ADDRESS BY WEI KUO-CHING, ENTITLED "CARRY FORWARD THE FINE TRADITIONS IN POLITICAL WORK AND IMPROVE OUR ARMY'S COMBAT STRENGTH IN THE NEW HISTORICAL CONDITIONS," HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED OR SUMMARIZED BY THE OPEN MEDIA. HUA KUO-FENG, YEH CHIEN-YING AND TENG HSIAO-PING, SPEAKING AS CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMEN OF THE MILITARY COMMISSION RESPECTIVELY, ENDORSED WEI'S REPORT BUT SHED LITTLE LIGHT ON ITS CONTENT. TENG, A CLOSE POLITICAL ASSOCIATE OF WEI, PRAISED WEI'S REPORT MOST EXPLICITLY: "THE REPORT IS GOOD BECAUSE IT PROPOSES PERTINENT SOLUTIONS AFTER STUDYING THE PROBLEMS POSED BY THE NEW HISTORICAL CONDITIONS.

4. LACKING KNOWLEDGE OF THE SPECIFICS OF WEI'S REPORT AND THE DRAFT DOCUMENTS, ONE CANNOT ASSESS THE IMPORT OR ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CONFERENCE INSOFAR AS POLITICAL WORK IN THE ARMY IS CONCERNED. BUT IMPORTANT CLUES TO LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS ARE PROVIDED BY THE SPEECHES DELIVERED BY HUA, YEH AND TENG (THE FIRST TWO PUBLISHED IN FULL, TENG'S IN SUMMARY. WHILE THE THREE SPEECHES MUTUALLY HAILED, APPROVED AND ENDORSED EACH OTHER, THEY DIFFERED SIGNIFICANTLY IN TONE,

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

EMPHASIS AND CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE ROLE OF POLITICAL
WORK. IN ESSENCE, EACH SPEECH SETS OUT AN APPROACH TO
POLITICAL LIFE IN THE CONTEMPORARY PRC.

5. CHAIRMAN HUA KUO-FENG, STILL HOLDING HIGH THE BANNER OF
MAO TSE-TUNG THOUGHT, REVEALED HIS ORINETATION IN ONE KEY
PASSAGE: "POLITICS IS THE COMMANDER, THE SOUL IN EVERYTHING...
THE ARMY MUST HAVE A FIRM AND CORRECT POLITICAL ORIENTATION;
THE POLITICAL DEMANDS ON THE ARMY MUST BE STRICTER AND HIGHER.
IF POLITICAL WORK IN THE ARMY WERE WEAKENED, IT WOULD BE
IMPOSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN OUR PARTY'S ABSOLUTE LEADERSHIP OVER
THE ARMY...FOR US, REALLY POWERFUL COMBAT CAPABILITY COMES
FROM A CLOSE INTEGRATION OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE A HIGH LEVEL OF
PROLETARIAN CONSCIOUSNESS WITH MODERN WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT."
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PAGE 04 PEKING 01681 01 OF 02 060242Z

CONTINUING, HUA CALLS FOR STRENGTHENING THE LEADING ROLE OF
THE PARTY COMMITTEE AS "THE KEY TO IMPROVING POLITICAL WORK."

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PAGE 01 PEKING 01681 02 OF 02 060251Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PEKING 1681

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE NECESSITY FOR IMPROVEMENT OF

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

THE ARMY'S WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENTS, HUA EMPHASIZES THAT "THE QUESTION OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE IS WHO HAS THE GUNS AND AT WHOM THEY ARE POINTED." HUA ADOPTED A CONCILIATORY TONE ON CONTINUING DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE PRC, OBSERVING THAT "ENEMIES WHO FIGHT AGAINST SOCIALISM ARE ALWAYS ONLY A HANDFUL" AND MAKING NO MENTION OF THE NEED TO CARRY OUT RECTIFICATION.

6. YEH CHIEN-YING DELIVERED HOMILIES AND REMINISCENCES ON THE TRADITIONAL IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL WORK IN THE PLA, SUPPORTING HUA'S ASSESSMENT BY TERMING POLITICAL WORK "THE LIFEBLOOD OF OUR ARMY." YEH MAKES CLEAR THAT HE WAS OUT OF PEKING AND HENCE NOT DIRECTLY AND INTIMATELY INVOLVED IN PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE. HENCE, ALMOST AS IF GROPING FOR A THEME ("YOU COMRADES ASK ME TO SAY SOMETHING, BUT WHAT SHOULD I SPEAK ABOUT? WELL, LET ME SAY SOMETHING ABOUT POLITICAL WORK AS THE LIFEBLOOD OF CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 PEKING 01681 02 OF 02 060251Z

OUR ARMY."), YEH DELIVERS HIS FAMILIAR SET-PIECE ON FINE TRADITIONS DATING BACK TO CHINGKANGSHAN, GROOMING OF REVOLUTIONARY SUCCSSSORS, AND UNITY. YEH CITES AND SECONDS HUA KUO-FENG'S APPROACH AT THE NATIONAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE: "FAR FROM BEING WEAKENED, POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL WORK SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED..." BUT YEH GOES SOMEWHAT FARTHER THAN HUA IN TAKING AIM AT LIN PIAO AND THE GANG OF FOUR, "WHO FORMED A DIRECT LINE OF SUCCESSION," AND IN CALLING FOR "CONSCIENTIOUS RECTIFICATION IN THE ARMY SO AS TO RAISE ITS COMBAT STRENGTH."

7. TENG HSIAO-PING, CONTINUING TO REVEL IN HIS ROLE OF ICONOCLAST, SAID VIRTUALLY NOTHING ABOUT POLITICAL WORK AT A CONFERENCE DEVOTED TO IT. EXPOUDNING ON HIS FAVORITE THEME OF "SEEKING TRUTH FROM FACTS," TENG ASSUMED FOR HIMSELF THE ROLE OF INTERPRETING CHAIRMAN MAO AND MOA TSE-TUNG THOUGHT "ACCURATELY." INDEED, THE POEPLE'S DILY HEADLINE, IN AN UNUSUAL AND PROVOCATIVE ACKNOWLEGEMENT OF TENG'S AUTHORITY, REFERRED TO TENG'S "SUCCINCT EXPOUDING OF CHAIRMAN MAO'S BRILLIANT CONCEPT OF SEEKING TRUTH FROM FACTS."

8. TENG THREW DOWN THE GAUNTLET BEFORE THOSE WHO, IN HIS VIEW, MECHANICALLY COPY, TRANSMIT AND REPRODUCE THE WORKS OF MARX, ENGELS, LENIN, STALIN AND MAO AND WHO "INSIST THAT TO DO OTHERWISE IS TO GO AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF THE PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE." CONCLUDING THIS THOUGH OMINOUSLY, TENG WARMS "THIS IS NO MINOR ISSUE. IT INVOLVES THE WHOLE APPROCAH TO MARXISM-LENINISM-MAO TSETUNG THOUGHT."

9. IN ESSENCE TENG HOLDS UP WEI KUO-CHING AND HIS REPORT

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

AS EXEMPLARY: IN TENG'S WORDS, "THE REPORT IS GOOD BECAUSE
IT PROPOSES PRTINENT SOLUTIONS AFTER STUDYING THE PROBLEMS
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PAGE 03 PEKING 01681 02 OF 02 060251Z

POSED BY THE NEW HISTOICAL CONDITIONS...IF WE JUST
COPIED PAST DOCUMENTS WORD FOR WORD, WE WOULDN'T BE
SOLVING ANY PROBLEM, LET ALONE SOLVING ANY PROBLEM
CORRECTLY." THIS CAN BE READ AS AN INDIRECT SLAM
AT HUA AND YEH, WHOSE PONTIFICATING LEADS NOWHERE.
THUS, WHILE TENG INITIALLY APPLAUDS THE HUA AND YEH
SPEECHES AS "VERY INCISIVE AND VERY IMPORTANT," HE
TERMS WEI'S "VERY GOOD" AND REFERS TO IT ALONE IN THE
BODY OF HIS SPEECH.

10. TENG ENHANCES HIS IMAGE AS PROPHET OF CHANGING
TIMES AND NEWKDEAS, STATING, IN ALMOST DIRECT OPPOSITION
TO YEH'S EMPHASIS ON CONTINUITY, THAT "THE GREATEST
DIFFERENCE FOR OUR ARMY IS THAT IT HAS SWITCHED OVER FROM
AN ENVIRONMENT OF PROTRACTD WAR TO A PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT...
TIMES HAVE CHANGED, CONDITIONS HAVE CHANGED, SO THAT THE
METHODS OF SOLVING PROBLEMS HAVE TO CHANGE TOO."

11. TENG ALSO DELIVERED A PARTING SHOT AT FORMER
ASSOCIATES OF LIN PIAO WHIAUPCICCPA NOTHING TO DAMPEN
THE FEARS OF THOSE CONVINCED THAT TENG REMAINS BENT ON REVENGE.
IN A NOT-SO-VEILED WARNING AT PERSONS LIKE LI TEH-SHENG,
TENG NOTES THAT "LIN PIAO, WHO DID GREAT HARM IN THE
ARMY, WAS SCARCELY CRITICIZED IN THE PAST DUE TO COVERUP
BY THE GANG OF FOUR" AND CALLS FOR "IN-DEPTH" EXPOSURE AND
CRITICISM OF BOTH THE GANG OF FOUR AND LIN PIAO.

12. COMMENT: WHILE THERE REMAINS THE DANGER OF
OVERINTERPRETING SEMANTIC AND THEMATIC DIFFERENCES IN
THE PUBLISHED VERSIONS OF THE SPEECHES, WE BELIEVE
THAT THE DIFFERENCES REVEALED ARE SUBSTANTIVE, THAT
THEY WILL BEPERCEIVED AS SUCH BY THE CHINESE, AND
THAT THEY WILL DEEPEN THE CLEAVAGE BETWEEN TENG AND
THE OTHERS WHICH HAD SURFACED OPENLY DURING THE NATIONAL
SCIENCE CONFERENCE.
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PAGE 04 PEKING 01681 02 OF 02 060251Z

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EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
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